



CITY OF SAINT PAUL

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FIRE PREVENTION PRACTICE #1-9

September 5, 1995

TO: Fire Inspection Staff

FROM: Steve Zaccard
Fire Marshal

SUBJECT: **STANDARDS FOR FIRE INSPECTORS**

"THIS PRACTICE IS TO SERVE AS A PROCEDURAL GUIDE FOR YOU TO FOLLOW. EXCEPTIONS TO THIS PRACTICE SHALL BE APPROVED BY THE FIRE MARSHAL THROUGH YOUR SUPERVISOR".

These standards are reinforced to outline what is expected, as well as establish some guidelines by which Performance Evaluations are measured. These standards were last issued back on January 9, 1989

Your performance as a Fire Prevention Inspector is an important factor in the high quality of the Fire Department's Fire Prevention Division.

1. Office time is to be used to complete paperwork from previous inspections, make phone calls, send appointment letters, etc. All paperwork from the previous day should be turned into the work buckets by 9:00 a.m. to assure that letters go out to owners quickly and mileage reports are accurate.
2. A 15-minute rest break is provided during the first half of your work day. A 15-minute rest break is also provided to you during the second half of your work day. Rest breaks are city paid time and shall not be taken in a facility serving alcoholic beverages.
3. A 45-minute lunch break is provided, to be taken sometime between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Rest breaks may be combined with the lunch breaks to improve the inspector's "wellness." Lunch breaks may not be taken at the end of the day. These 45-minutes include travel time to your lunch break location. Exceptions may be necessary, but must be pre-approved by your supervisor.

4. Rest breaks and lunch breaks shall be shown on your miscellaneous time sheets as a #9, and the exact time specified. Employees may not skip their break or lunch to leave work early.
5. No one shall leave the corporate limits of the City of Saint Paul on city time without permission from your supervisor.
6. The "Inspection Time" shown on your checklist shall include any paperwork done at the time of the inspection or in your vehicle immediately following the actual inspection. Paperwork done outside the office and away from the inspection site shall be specifically identified on your miscellaneous time sheet with location and a #6 for other reports and records.
7. Quality is a most important aspect of your inspection, which shall be a thorough inspection of the building and its occupancy. Fire and Life Safety requirements are equal in importance to Housing Code requirements. You will be held responsible for Fire Code, Housing Code, and applicable Building Code enforcement.
8. All Fire Prevention personnel are expected to conduct themselves in a polite, courteous, and professional manner at all times. Allegations of rudeness or other misconduct will be investigated thoroughly, and where justified, disciplinary action shall be taken in a manner prescribed by your Bargaining Agreement and Civil Service Rules.
9. Overtime assignments are occasionally made for public programs, inspections, etc. Overtime must be pre-approved by the Fire Marshal, and you must turn in a vacation/overtime card in for each assignment; comp time may be approved by supervisor. Mileage and time should be noted. As each type of assignment will determine the mileage and pay, check with your supervisor for the correct forms to fill out.
10. If you find that an inspection will not be concluded in time to allow you to return to the office by the end of your workday, call your supervisors to let them know. If overtime will be necessary, you should discuss this at that time.
11. Respond to complaints quickly and effectively using the computer priority number:
 1. Life Safety Complaint (i.e., smoke detectors, basic facilities, fire hazards).
 2. Mayor's Complaint and Information Office.
 3. Referrals from City Departments.
 4. General public complaints (not life safety).
12. Send appointment letters two weeks in advance of the date the inspection is due. The "renewal date" or "reinspection due" date should be closely adhered to. Reinspections take priority when you have outstanding orders and must assure corrections have been made. Avoid canceling appointments and try to accommodate the owner's schedule if possible. Always be prompt for appointments.

13. Priorities should be:
 1. Initial complaints that affect life safety (24 hours).
 2. Reinspections of complaints or Certificate of Occupancy that affect life safety (24 hours).
 3. Reinspections that do not affect life safety.
 4. New Certificate of Occupancy renewals.
14. Check smoke detectors in any unit you are in, regardless of the purpose of the inspection.
15. Schedule a productive inspection day:
 1. First appointment should be made for no later than 9:30 a.m.
 2. A sufficient number of inspections should be scheduled for each day, with fill-ins (complaints, referrals) used for no-shows, etc.
 3. Thorough checklists and a few lines of pertinent information on the worksheet should be completed at the inspection site. Phone calls, appointment letters, and research can be done between 7:30 and 9:00 a.m., however all other paperwork should be completed in the field.
16. The checklist is a guide for inspectors to assure that they inspect all items that are listed. Much effort has been made in developing and improving checklists for the inspector's use. A "CEP" after a code reference indicates there is a Fire Prevention Code Enforcement Policy which applies to the enforcement of this code. Code Enforcement Policies are written after determinations by the Fire Marshal as to how this code is to be applied. An (HA-1), or other indication of a handout after the code number is a reference to the flier which is mailed to the owner if you cite this violation on the checklist. Inspectors have all been provided with copies of Code Enforcement Policies and handouts. You are responsible to know the content of each of these, and must enforce the code uniformly. It is important that all inspectors understand and enforce Division policies to assure correct application of all codes and minimize hardship on building owners.
17. Fire Prevention Practices have been developed to guide the direction of staff as to general professional performance. They address issues such as office hours, uniforms, mileage, etc. Each inspector should review and follow the practices as written. These are intended to protect inspectors from criticism because it provides a written support for department expectations.
18. Treat the public with respect and consideration. They may not agree with the codes you are enforcing, but do not let them use your personality or behavior as an excuse to procrastinate or refuse to do the work required.
19. Use good judgment when working in the field. Do not volunteer information to tenants, owners, or the general public. You are a neutral party and should not make remarks in public that may come back to haunt you.

20. You represent the Fire Department and should be in full uniform during working hours. Be conscious of the appearance of your uniform.
21. Cooperate with other inspectors and the staff. Everyone in Fire Prevention has a heavy workload and a comparable stress factor. Showing consideration and respect for your co-workers and other staff members will make everyone's job more pleasant.

These guidelines should help management and staff understand what is expected. Exceptions are considered, but should be discussed with your supervisor.

Your efforts are greatly appreciated and, with everyone's cooperation, we can continue to provide Saint Paul citizens with one of the best inspection programs in the nation.

cc: Chief Trudeau
Cindy Menten

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